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TOWARD GREATNESS.

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UNIVERSITY EXTENSION IN THE UNITED STATES IS MOVING TOWARD GREATNESS BECAUSE OF AN ACADEMIC REVOLUTION THAT EMBRACES CHANGING TECHNOLOGY, ACKNOWLEDGEMENT THAT LIFELONG LEARNING IS A NECESSITY, AND A REALIZATION THAT THE PUBLIC IS NOT SUFFICIENTLY WELL INFORMED. MOREOVER, STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS ARE TENDING MORE AND MORE TO ENLIST THE AID OF THE UNIVERSITIES IN PUBLIC SERVICE. IN ORDER TO REALIZE THE PROMISE OF GREATNESS, HOWEVER, UNIVERSITY EXTENSION DIVISIONS REQUIRE CHANGES IN THE LEVEL OF SELF SUPPORT, AND IMPROVED REWARD SYSTEM FOR EXTENSION INSTRUCTORS AND PROFESSORS, BETTER MEANS OF RECRUITING AND TRAINING EXTENSION PERSONNEL, AND THE STRENGTHENING OF SUCH NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AS THE NATIONAL UNIVERSITY EXTENSION ASSOCIATION. (THIS SPEECH WAS PRESENTED AT THE TENTH ANNUAL SEMINAR ON LEADERSHIP IN UNIVERSITY ADULT EDUCATION, MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY, 1967.) (LY)

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NOTE:

Copies of the addresses given by Dr. Barnett Rosenberg, Dr. Robert Green and Dr. Hideya Kumata were not available to the producers of this Proceedings, because of the informal nature of their remarks.

TOWARD GREATNESS

Donald R. McNeil
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When I first received the program for the 10th Annual Seminar on Leadership in University Adult Education and saw that my assignment was to speak on "Toward Greatness", I did an immediate double-take to make sure there was no question mark at the end of the phrase.

Unfortunately, in many quarters of the academic world today the question mark still is being added when a university looks at those programs variously called continuing education, university extension, and adult education.

The question mark takes a variety of forms. It questions the quality, the scope and the depth of what the institution is doing in the field. It denies budgetary support. It restricts space requirements. It protects the top-rate professors from becoming involved with the problems of society. It relegates extension programs to a place low on the priority list. It promotes a great deal of talk about the fine public service role for universities, yet ties up the purse strings and the talent in a way that nobody can get at them. Among the people who would insert the question mark are faculty members, department chairmen, deans, chancellors, vice presidents, presidents, and boards of trustees.

Despite the unconscious (and conscious) efforts of those who would insert the question mark, a single fact remains: We in higher continuing education, or extension, <u>are</u> moving toward greatness. Though it is undiscernible in places, and certainly not uniform in pace or quality, the greatness we strive for is coming toward <u>us</u> as much as we are moving toward <u>it</u>. And we move at various speeds. Some institutions crawl, some lumber along, some race. Some are dragged forward by the pressing demands of society. Some are feeling the relentless push of federal, state, and local governments. Some are being prodded by professional, occupational, and social groups.

In other places, the pace has been quickened from within. Extension is beginning to get money - driblets to be sure - but hard dollars nonetheless. Good people are moving into the field. Decent quarters are becoming available. The push by extension leaders is having effect. They have acknowledged external needs and in one way or another some of them have found resources to do the job.

Despite the many handicaps facing those who would move Toward Greatness, there should be no question in our minds. It is not a question mark, but a resounding exclamation point that belongs after the words, Toward Greatness!

By the way, involved as I am with the Wisconsin concept that extension is broadgauged and almost synonymous with "outreach", I am going to use "extension" as the all-encompassing word which embraces adult education,

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continuing education, community development, and problem solving, regardless of where, when and how the educational program is conducted.

Why are we moving toward greatness? I believe it is because we are in the middle of an academic revolution - a revolution so far reaching and profound that we have not yet begun to grasp the full implications of it. To the twin concepts of teaching and research now so thoroughly embedded in the fiber of the American university there is gradually being added in genuine, concrete terms the third function which so many people talk about, but which too few people and institutions yet support realistically. That third function is the growing commitment, devotion, design, and implementation of the extension function of the American university.

Much has been written about the underlying factors promoting this academic revolution and I will not dwell on them. There is the changing technology, with the resulting factors of human obsolescence, humiliation and degradation of individual dignity. There is the creeping acknowledgment that lifelong learning is a necessity and this feeling is beginning to pervade the entire land. There is the dawning and uneasy realization that we are not as informed a citizenry as we pretend to be. The recent current events quiz on television testified to this when it was estimated that about 40% of the United States think that Chiang Kai-chek is the leader of Mainland China.

There is what one sociologist calls the "threat of leisure" which, instead of encouraging development of sound educational programs to fill at least part of the leisre time hours, is resulting in honky-tonk recreation; long idle hours in front of the boob-tube, and tedious, wasteful, boring hours doing nothing.

When one moves to the problem solving area, potent factors are at work promoting the academic revolution. The demands upon universities have become extremely acute. We have universities moving vigorously into the war against poverty. Some are involved deeply in economic development. Others are concerned with environmental pollution, be it of the water, the air, the streets or the mind. Many are attacking the problems of race, the problems of the cities, the problems of government, the problems of manpower development, the problems of production - both by farm and factory.

Often the leadership in this area comes from the federal government. In many ways the government is ahead of the universities with the realization that for intelligent problem-solving activity by universities, the extension function must be built into the legislation. We have three major programs designed specifically for extension: Cooperative Extension with more than half a century of experience; Title I of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (though it has not turned out to be general support so much as a series of unrelated projects thrown together); and the Technical Services Act, designed to bring university resources to business and industry.

But beyond these there are other pieces of federal legislation which, I feel, are promoting the academic revolution. The extension function is built into each: The Elementary-Secondary Act, the Vocational and Adult

Education Act, the Food for Peace Plan, the Outdoor Recreation Act, the Sea Grant University Act, the Public Works and Economic Development Act and others I'm sure you and I don't even know about. By the way, provision for "continuing education" has even been added to the Academic Facilities Act.

Moreover, the growing acknowledgment that lifelong learning - EXTENSION, if you please - is a necessary part of existence in this last third of the 20th century reaches to the topmost pinnacles of power. For example, in President Johnson's recent State of the Union he talked of programs and problems which already concern many universities committed to Extension. The President called for more help for American Indians and migrant workers, support for developing educational television and new ways of training policemen to help in controlling crime. In the Senate, Abraham Ribicoff and others have called for urban action centers in universities with urban extension programs, inservice training projects for public officials, and other university-based and oriented programs, parts of which already exist in some universities.

At the state and local level, governments are beginning to press us for greater involvement. In the city of Milwaukee, for example, we participate through our county agent in Project OFF, designed to take ADC mothers off the welfare rolls. We do the family management training and from there the women move on to vocational training. Since May of 1965 this program has resulted in the actual full-time employment of 191 ADC mothers, and the savings in welfare payments and supervision have far exceeded the cost of the educational investment. The County Board liked our participation so well that they have given funds to University Extension to employ additional home economists so that the program can expand. In other counties, county agents and campus specialists are feeling the press to become deeply involved in resource development, health projects, youth programs, training for public officials, educational programs for the aged, management courses and cultural offerings of all sorts.

At the state level, we train social workers in the field. We are part of the planning agency for highway safety. We engage in joint programs of retraining teachers for the Department of Public Instruction. We help with the problems of the vocational schools -- from literacy to upgrading the skills of the vocational school instructors. We are involved in conservation education plans. We work with the Department of Resource Development and the various Governor's commissions and committees. There probably is not a single state agency we do not serve in one way or another. And, we note, these demands are increasing.

These outside forces are good. They bear down on universities in a way that promotes the academic revolution and they are parallel to forces inside universities which are moving us toward the same goal. Thus in my mind the academic revolution is inevitable, for these parallel forces within our institutions are growing. Let me take note of a few.

An increasing number of presidents of colleges and universities are beginning to support their institutions' role in extension, adult education, and problem solving. (I would not deny that the advent of federal funding has

had an impact on their thinking.) Nevertheless, the presidents are backing this third function - Extension - in a variety of ways. In the Land-Grant institutions, extension services are being reorganized. At the November 1966 meeting of the Land-Grant Association, representatives from 17 merged extension units met to consider common problems. While they vary in scope and depth of total programming, these merged operations have great portent for the future. At that meeting the prediction was made that by next year the number of merged units will have doubled.

In urban-oriented universities, the presidents are creating new units or reorganizing old units to become involved in the problems of our times. As state colleges and junior colleges grow they, too, are entering the extension field.

In some institutions there is increasing financial support both from public funds and private funds. Coupled with this, we detect a changing reward system which puts a higher degree of acceptability on a professor's involvement with the problems in society. In some institutions the extension administration has moved into the higher power councils of the university and has equal status and authority with those whose primary concerns are research and undergraduate and graduate teaching.

In short, the revolutionary road in academia is open and our job is not to sigh wistfully and say, "Come the revolution things will be different". Our role is to hasten the inevitable, to capitalize on demands from without in order to document our case for more fast-moving change from within.

When we look within our institutions--and ourselves--we find great variation in capacity, talent, dollars and commitment. We have both good and bad forces at work at every administrative level--from the departments to the presidency. We have strong programs and weak programs. In some fields we are loaded with talent and in others we have none. Intensive and extensive programming in some areas runs parallel to narrow and shallow programs in others.

But without appearing to be too defensive, let me ask, "Is it any different in our campus teaching and research programs? Don't <u>they</u> vary? Don't we have both strong and weak residence departments; research both notable and obscure; teaching both inspirational and deadly?"

But that's not the exact point. Variation there will always be--in quality and in quantity--wherever there is education. The precise point is that we in extension should not confuse this variation with the steadily mounting capabilities and interest of American universities to engage in outreach programs.

However...to say that we are moving ahead, that we are in the throes of an academic revolution, that we are moving toward greatness is <u>not</u> to say we are devoid of problems. We have them all right. We have them both inside and outside. And we must resolve them if we are to handle the demands from without as imaginatively and as thoroughly as we should. How we resolve them, I believe, will determine the pace of the academic revolution.

Within our institutions I would place our problems in this priority:

First...the principle of high self support which is the undergirding on which many extension programs are built. It is a vicious system. It forces universities to make educational decisions with income as the major criteria. It causes us to neglect the very people who often need the educational services the most. In times of inflation and spiralling costs we begin to price ourselves out of even the more lucrative markets. No-yield programs have to be discarded, for the emphasis must be on making money. It inhibits our work with small businesses, teachers, social workers, and low income groups. It steers us toward the engineer, the lawyer, the large corporation and the upper income housewife. It puts the <u>total</u> university outreach program out of balance.

Let me add a couple of reservations to these statements. I believe that there is an "ability to pay" principle that must be considered in mounting a total extension program. Given the facts of life, we shall have to agree that flexible fee structures are here to stay for a while. It would be utopia, indeed, if society regarded extension as it does the undergraduate and graduate training. Generally, on campus, there is no variation in fees whether students take science courses requiring expensive laboratories or less costly courses requiring only books, a professor and a library.

But we in extension simply have not reached that point in the academic revolution. We will be forced to charge higher fees to those who can afford to pay them. What is vicious about the system is that many universities use the formula of high self-support for <u>everything</u> extension does.

I know that Wisconsin is better off than most states. For the old General Extension programs at Wisconsin we are still held to a two-thirds self-support principle by the legislature. In other words, for every state dollar we get, we must raise two. This would not be so bad if we could separate those programs which realistically could be expected to pay at least two-thirds of the cost. Unfortunately, the formula encompasses no-yield poverty programs, service-oriented community development projects, involvement with low-income groups, and some of our work with cities, towns and counties.

We have a particular grievance in Wisconsin because even credit instruction is required to bring in the two-thirds self support. We must somehow earn the difference between the fees collected and the two-thirds self support. Significantly, campus instruction for credit is based at twenty percent self support. The same course, even with the same professor, requires twenty percent self support if on a campus and 66-2/3's if operated through University Extension. And of course, our fees for credit classes are pegged to residence so we cannot even raise prices for credit courses to get our required income. Our cry that a credit course is a credit course no matter where or when it is taught finally has been accepted by our university. The problem has now been transferred to the political arena where we have not yet convinced the Governor and the legislature that we are entitled to the same eighty percent tax support for credit classes as are the resident campuses.

I am sure many of you are wondering why I complain with a two-thirds self support requirement. Many states would be ecstatic with one-third state support for their programs, and especially with the one hundred percent publicly supported cooperative extension program now joined to it.

The percentage, I contend, is only relevant to the size of the program. For you, even seventy-five percent self support would be low compared to what you who are at, or near, one hundred percent self support are now getting. For us, if we had to go to seventy-five percent we would have to raise $1.5 million the first biennium <u>just to stay even</u> in our programming.

It is the <u>principle</u> of high self support that is important however you may judge it in your own terms. A realistic estimate of income is necessary, but a realistic definition of which programs can bring a high level of support is a necessary part of the institution's commitment. The no-yield programs are always penalized. Moreover, with a self support formula that includes everything extension does and which is not connected to the institution's total request for monies in some reasonable way, the extension program becomes a convenient target for the legislative dollar hunters who will merely raise the percentage of self support by a raise of the voting hand. They do not do that with the campus teaching programs; why should they do it just with extension programs?

Another feature of the high level self-support principle is the pressure it puts on extension administrators to over estimate income in order to build their programs. If you can raise your estimated income you can build more staff, start more programs. But while you may bootleg some of that staff for low-yield programs, in the long run it forces you to keep clamoring for the staff to make money. As we have to tell some of our departments, "Go for the dough!"

To meet the self support problem, we should be thinking constructively of new methods of financing. We should be more successful with foundations. We should be better informed about, and go after more vigorously, the available federal funds. We can start working with state and local agencies to get funds for continuing education built into their budgets so they may contract services with us. We can keep pressing for a larger share of the university's budget, though I realize that success here depends on resolving the other problems inside our institutions.

Let us now consider the others on our problem priority list. After high self support, I would rate as second, the problem of the reward system.

The reward system simply <u>has</u> to be changed. As the academic revolution progresses, the demands for equal treatment of extension people will increase. As it now stands, professors are judged entirely in accordance with the "Publish or Perish" doctrine or some mystical concept of "good teaching", and if they happen <u>also</u> to be good extension people they can follow the route to tenure and full professorship. But with the competition for talent and the size of the job confronting us, extension <u>has</u> to have its <u>own</u> criteria for judging its peers. The standards of excellence should be

high; quality should be the watchword; but those who perform extension functions should be judged by a jury of their peers--namely their extension colleagues.

I know that many object to this concept. There is the danger of creating a sub-standard, second-rate reward system, with extension then becoming a dumping ground for those who cannot pass muster in established residence departments. This misses the point. Why is it automatically assumed that extension's reward system would be inferior? I know of many resident professors we will not accept for extension teaching because they cannot teach adults. The problem is that many professors confuse the standards by which professors should be judged. Traditionally, they look for the publication list and having found it a short one, they have no realistic way of judging a professor--even in the teaching field. We need criteria for the extension function and people should be judged according to that function. We do it with librarians and student counsellors, even college union people. We do not do it for Extension.

Professors on tenure review committees have said to me, "We have no way of judging extension people. We have no criteria." And I reply to them, "List for me your criteria for judging a good teacher." They have none. Beyond the publication list, they have little on which to judge a professor. In the long run, it will be easier for us to establish extension criteria than it will be for <u>them</u> to establish criteria in any realistic and fair way.

Let me turn the problem around. Because we are an independent and equal unit in The University of Wisconsin system, with a separate budget, administration, and responsibility for statewide Extension (though still having strong links to the resident campuses), we decide we want to allocate funds and staff to a particular problem. If we are dependent on campus judgments of personnel we want, then we face almost impossible handicaps. In the last year we lost a good lawyer who was an expert in shoreline zoning because he could not get an appointment in the Law School. It makes no difference to the campus that the person might be the best possible extension person to do the job. And to get such a person and retain him, we have to offer him a career opportunity. In the poverty war, we often need people out of government, out of industry, or out of labor unions to join us, and we get hung up on traditional requirements of the campuses--the Ph.D., a long publication record, years of college teaching.

I do not ask that we dilute the quality of academic review; I ask only that we differentiate the functions and then reward people for what their commitment in the university actually is.

In some areas of extension activity, especially in the county agent area, we have developed with moderate success our argument that the resident campuses merely have too narrow a view of teaching. They regard teaching as being <u>in</u> the classroom and <u>on</u> a campus. We simply state that our people teach in a different way at a different place and at a different time. Even if this argument is accepted, the effect will be minimal, for the stereotype of extension, the county agents, and adult education programs remains, and the acceptance by the traditionalists will be begrudging and short lived.

I do believe we can add the extension dimension to the reward system without diluting the overall standards of the university. If we are able to control our standards and our review system we shall continue to live at the sufferance of the resident campuses.

By this time, you probably are wondering if I am advocating an organization completely separate from the resident campus primarily devoted to research and undergraduate teaching. I assure you I am not. The ideal situation is when campus and extension can work together--as partners however, not with one party (extension) going hat in hand to the resident unit. Cooperative Extension over the years has become a potent, accepted factor in university life because this program had budgetary and staff resources. Research, teaching and extension are all a part of the "total man", as they say. In effect, we are calling for joint appointments, subject to yearly review as the professor's interests change. We have to draw upon resident professors--some full time, some part time, some on and in-and-out basis. But authority must be given to extension to control its own destiny.

When the academic revolution involving extension reaches the point research has (and remember the research revolution has come mostly since World War II), then it may indeed be as my president has predicted, that the entire University will one day ask a professor, "What have you done in public service?" the same way we now ask the professor, "What have you done in research?"

But this just won't happen by itself. It will be up to us to convince our institutions of the new opportunities, of the need for long-range planning. We must provide the leadership in establishing the concept of extension and public service. We must connect it with research--especially applied research--and we must learn how to involve the resident professor in the problems outside. How many times has a professor said to me when I have queried him as to why he was not involved in extension activities, "I've never been asked." It takes more than asking, however. It takes good planning, specific targets and good relations with professors throughout the institution. It requires knowledge of who is good, what their research and teaching specialties are, and finally assurance that service in extension will not harm their careers, that the "recognition" they will get for extension work is negotiable in the academic marketplace.

If we changed the self support principle and got a decent reward system, we would still have a few accounts to settle. We need a structure that can be responsive to the needs of the people and still be in a position to tap the total university resources. We need equality in the control councils of the institution and firm backing by the top administration. But mostly we need what I think is our third main problem--talent. We need all kinds of talent: talent from the disciplines, talent for administration, talent pools for ideas. We need new kinds of people with new and different skills. We need skills ranging from urban planning to teaching English as a second language. We need specialists out of the disciplines and an ability to put those specialists together to attack problems of the aging, land use management, recreation, poverty and health. This talent will come into the universities from other state and local agencies, the business world and government. It will come from other universities in our own states and from other states. We will, in the process, raid and be raided and we will be better as a result.

The talent shortage needs attention. Several universities now conduct special training programs. The University of Chicago has an excellent summer workshop, among other programs. Syracuse is active. The old National Agricultural Extension Center for Advanced Study at Wisconsin has now been reorganized, expanded and lodged in University Extension to train extension people for total university extension activity, drawing upon the total resources of the institution. There will be others. And there should be. We are going to have to train many of the professional extension leaders ourselves if we are to get the talent we'll need in the next five to ten years.

Changing the levels of self support, altering the reward system, and introducing better methods of recruitment and training of talent are three major musts for us to act upon within our institutions if we are to hurry the pace of the academic revolution.

Outside the universities there are problems too, and again we must provide the leadership for resolving them. Many of these revolve around our future relations with the federal and state governments.

In our eagerness to get funded, we sometimes accept the role as gas station for federal, state and local agencies. They drive up, order a three-month supply of training--on their terms, and, sometimes with their people--and then move on, with no lasting influence on, or support of, the institution.

As partners in this "creative federalism", we should insist on being in on the planning at the very early stages. We should maintain control of the academic content, and we should jointly evaluate the programs regularly. We should also form a united front on matters such as insisting on sufficient lead time to mount a program, determining proper overhead payments, and dividing of functions between the two partners - the government and the industry.

The impetus of the federal government especially has forced some of us to use our improvement money for matching funds and we thereby lose our initiative.

We should be making our case now for institutional grants to build in our capacity for extension activities as Title I of the higher Education Act originally was designed to do, and as some universities have succeeded in doing with the Office of Economic Opportunity.

Lastly, we should be strengthening our national organizations such as the National University Extension Association, the AUEC, and the Adult Education Association. It is easy to see phenomenal progress of these organizations just this past year and that progress should continue. We in extension should learn to speak with a single voice, which may call for more coordination if not consolidation by the national groups. And we should not be afraid to bring political pressure to bear for those programs we need.

In short, to move toward greatness, to engage in the academic revolution which is already transforming universities, we need leadership--inside and

outside our institutions of higher education. Our image is bad in some places. It need not be. Not enough people even know what we are doing. And if this ignorance is allowed to prevail within our institutions and in government, among foundations and the general public, then we shall have lost the golden opportunity. The opportunities are unprecedented and so are the openings for leadership. We not only will move together toward greatness, but we shall, I earnestly believe, help move an entire society toward greatness.

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